

have committee reports—one reason why we have committee reports. I cannot just read the bill and understand it fully. I need to read the committee reports. I need to see what the minority thinks. I always—always look to see what the minority is saying in a committee report because if there are problems with the bill, with a given bill, the minority is likely to raise those problems, give them visibility. So that, by way of explanation, again, is why I have become involved here. I want to hear what my colleagues on this side of the aisle have to say about this bill. I will probably hear a little of that, or some explanation in the conference that is coming up.

But I do not propose to be rushed. I may be run over by the steamroller, but I do not propose to get out of its way or just jump upon it and ride along with it, necessarily, at least. There may be some parts of the Contract With America that I will support. Mr. President, I do not put it on the level however, with the Federal Constitution. I do not put it on a level with the Declaration of Independence. I do not put that document—I have not read it, as I say. I have never read a Democratic platform. Why should I read this Contract With America? I did not have anything to do with it. I am not a part of it. I do not put it on a level with the Federalist Papers. So it does not have all of that aura of holiness about it or reference that I would accord to some other documents.

I say to my friend from Idaho that he is doing what he thinks is right. I assume that he believes in all particulars of the bill. Or he may not. He may not believe in every particular. And the Senate will have its opportunity to work its will on that bill. I fully recognize the need to do something about unfunded mandates. I recognize that need. We have gone down that path too far in many instances.

I just have a little more to say on this particular subject, and then I will talk a little about the matter before the Senate.

But here we all are hot and bothered about passing a constitutional amendment to balance the Federal budget without a hint as to how we will actually bring the budget into balance. Furthermore, there are those in this body who are completely unwilling, as I have said, to share the details of any plan to balance the budget with the people before we pass the amendment. Now I ask Senators. How does that comport with the so-called "message" that we just got in the November election? How is this bringing Government back to the people? How is this putting vital decisions back into the hands of the voters of America?

A member of the other body's leadership was quoted in the newspaper last week as admitting that, if the details of getting to a balanced budget by the year 2002 were public, there would be virtually no possibility—no possibility—of passing the amendment. Is it all

that bad? In other words, for Heaven's sake, do not tell the people what we are about to do to them. Do not tell them. Keep them in the dark. They want the amendment. Eighty percent said so in that poll. Keep them in the dark. Let us give it to them. They do not need to know what getting to balance entails. They do not need to know that. They do not need to be bothered with that.

If we exempt further tax increases or cuts in Social Security and defense, then what are we left with? In fiscal year 1995, the current fiscal year, Federal expenditures will total slightly more than \$1.53 trillion. Excepting Social Security at \$334 billion, defense at \$270 billion, and of course, interest on the national debt of \$235 billion, any cuts required to balance the budget would have to come out of the remaining \$692 billion. It has been estimated, with a fiscal year 1995 budget deficit of \$175 billion, those cuts would have to total 25.4 percent across the board on that \$692 billion. And in fiscal year 2002, using the same assumptions, those cuts would have to equal 28 percent in order to eliminate a projected deficit of \$322 billion.

Not discussing the options with the American people is like a suitor telling his prospective bride, "Marry me and I will make you happy." But when she asks what he has in mind, he simply answers, "Trust me, baby. You don't need to know the details. Trust me baby, you don't need to know the details." Talk about a pig in a poke; that is a hog in a rucksack.

This is big, arrogant Government going completely hog wild. This is us big guys, we big guys in Washington, saying to the American public, "We refuse to give you any idea of how we are going to enact over \$1 trillion of spending cuts and tax increases over the next 7 years." Note carefully that the 7-year period puts many of us in this body safely through the next election, by the way. It puts us safely through the next election. If this constitutional amendment is going to be sent out to the people, why do we not amend it; instead of having 7 years, make it 5. Make it 5 years. That is not customary. But there is no reason why it cannot be done. Make it 5 years so that the chickens will come to hatch during the terms of those of us who are here now who were elected in the past election, and they will certainly come to hatch during the terms of those who will be running next year, those who will be reelected or those who will be elected. It does not have to be a 7-year period. Make it a 5-year period. The 7 years puts us all safely through the next election.

Any plan to do that kind of violence to the Federal budget and to the national economy simply must be shared with the American people before we take an action that mandates that the violence be done. Let us not be a party to trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the people who sent us here. We do

not allow it in other matters. We do not expect anyone to buy a used car without knowing whether or not that car has defects. We do not expect anyone to buy a house without knowing if the roof leaks. We could not allow anyone to take out a mortgage on that house without requiring the lending agency to fully disclose the terms of the loan. Mr. President, we have truth-in-advertising statutes in this country. We have truth-in-lending requirements. Why, then, should the American people be expected to accept the constitutional balanced budget amendment that would lock this Government into a rigid and unforgiving economic straitjacket without knowing precisely what that means?

Mr. President, in August 1993, the Congress passed a reconciliation bill that accomplished well in excess of \$450 billion of deficit reduction, certainly well in excess of \$400 billion. Every single dollar of spending cuts and every single dollar of revenue increases were laid out in plain language for Members and the American public to see. Obviously, those cuts were difficult to vote for. The revenue increases were difficult to vote for. But that package is something that needed to be enacted then, and it is something that needs to be enacted now.

Most importantly, Mr. President, that deficit reduction was passed without a balanced budget amendment in the Constitution.

Mr. President, if those who have signed on to the Contract With America are so sure that they have the necessary 67 votes to pass the balanced budget constitutional amendment, then they should lay down a plan that will actually balance the budget. If they have 67 votes to pass the constitutional amendment on a balanced budget in both Houses, they should not have any concern that their budget plan would not pass. After all, a budget resolution requires only 51 votes, only a simple majority—16 votes less than would be required for a constitutional amendment, if all Members were present and voting.

So why not accomplish through a statute a plan which can begin to take effect immediately, instead of waiting for the year 2002? If they can produce 67 votes for a constitutional amendment, they can produce 51 votes to pass the tough legislation required to achieve that balanced budget. Why do they not do it?

Let us not undermine the Constitution of the United States and the people's faith in that Constitution by putting off the bitter medicine that will surely come if a constitutional amendment to balance the budget passes in the House and Senate and is ratified at the State level. There will have to be some tough, tough decisions. Well, why not make those tough decisions now? We do not need a constitutional amendment, if there are 67 votes in this body now. And if two-thirds of the 435 Members of the other body can